

VZCZCXRO1994  
OO RUEHDH RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHC #1187/01 0062127  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O P 062120Z JAN 10  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA IMMEDIATE 0671  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE 4235  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0510  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 2004  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 8476  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 5678  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 5371  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE 8865  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 4556  
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE 0637  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE 1792  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 7585  
INFO RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0254  
RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN PRIORITY 0155  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 6634  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 7491  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 8584  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 8726  
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY 0085  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3330  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9337  
RHMFISS/TSA HQ WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMCSUU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RULSDMK/TRANSPORTATION DEPT WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0832

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 STATE 001187

SIPDIS  
MONTREAL PLEASE PASS TO U.S. MISSION ICAO (KEHOE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2020  
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#) [AG](#) [CU](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [LE](#) [LY](#) [NI](#) [PK](#) [SA](#)  
SO, SU, SY, YM  
SUBJECT: ENGAGING ON NEW AIR PASSENGER SCREENING RULES

Classified By: Deputy Assistant Secretary  
John R. Bylerly; Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) This is an action cable. Please  
see paragraph 3.

#### Summary and Action Request

-----

¶2. (C) The attempted Christmas day bombing of a Northwest Airlines flight resulted in a presidential review and new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening requirements, initially for all passengers flying to the United States. After interagency consultation, these requirements were modified and focused more directly on people and flights related to 14 countries of interest. Citizens of these countries, as well as all passengers flying to the United States from or through these 14 countries remain subject to the enhanced TSA screening procedures, while others will be subject to random, threat-based screening. Several countries included among the 14 are close and cooperative U.S. partners in the fight against terrorism who have expressed shock and opposition to their inclusion. The list and the related enhanced screening regime are now long-term, though the composition of the list is open to on-going review.

13. (C) Drawing on the talking points and Q and A,s in paragraphs 8 and 9 below, posts are asked to engage at the highest appropriate levels within host governments to explain the need for the new screening measures. In the cases of Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, posts should seek to clarify to host governments that their nation,s inclusion in the list is not an attempt to equate them with state sponsors of terrorism and that the USG values and seeks to deepen our bilateral partnerships, including on counterterrorism. End of summary and action request.

#### Background

14. (C) In the wake of the December 25 attempt by Nigerian national Umar Farooq Abdulmutallab to destroy Northwest flight 253 to Detroit, the President ordered a review of all the facts and the Department of Homeland Security,s (DHS) Transportation Security

STATE 00001187 002 OF 007

Administration (TSA) instituted the immediate, worldwide enhanced screening of all air passengers departing non-stop to the United States. Officials of DHS, State and TSA met December 30, 2009, to confer on the longer-term application of these enhanced screening procedures, with an eye to better focusing the process and hopefully relieving the extraordinary burden they had placed on airports and airlines. The essence of TSA,s follow-on regime announced on January 3, 2010, is a requirement for sustained 100-percent screening of a reduced pool of persons, combined with random, threat-based screening of all other passengers.

5.(C) After discussion, State agreed to a list of 14 countries to be deemed &of interest.<sup>8</sup> These included the following: Cuba, Sudan, Syria, Iran, -- these four were drawn from the Department,s State Sponsors of Terrorism list -- Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen. (Note: Posts may confirm that their host nation is among the 14, but should not/not provide names of other countries on the list. End note.) All persons holding passports issued by any of these 14 countries, or persons who are flying to the United States from or through these countries, regardless of nationality (including U.S. citizens), are subject to enhanced screening procedures. Notice of the requirement for enhanced screening and the clearer designation of which groups are subject to enhanced screening was conveyed to airlines and other stakeholders -- including some host governments -- and became effective January 3. These changes, as well as other steps taken to mitigate the threat seen on December 25, were briefed to and discussed by the President, as posts will have seen in the press.

## Countries of Interest: Why Us?

-----

¶6. (C) According to TSA, in drawing up its draft list of countries of interest, its officials referred to the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism and its list of terrorist safe havens. Following the December 30, 2009, discussion of the draft list with State and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), State advised TSA that it had no objection to the final list of 14. The list reflects the combined application of current intelligence and current and historic patterns of terrorist movements and activities. TSA's new procedures are intended as a sustainable response. They will be subject to continuous review but are likely to be in place until

STATE 00001187 003 OF 007

another, better system can be found to ensure U.S. aviation security. State officials are actively working with DHS to find such a system, a system that is not based on country of origin but will ensure all travelers who are higher risk are identified and appropriate security measures are taken.

¶7. (C) Initial reports from addressee posts, as well as general media reports on host government reactions, indicate some confusion, surprise and dismay about the inclusion of some countries among the 14. Although the USG has not released the list, countries are reacting to leaks in the media. Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, are key partners in our counterterrorism efforts and have expressed concern about their inclusion. In responding to inquiries from host government officials about their country's inclusion in the list and the broader policy consequences, posts may draw on the talking points below. These points or accompanying background materials should not be left in any written or electronic form with the host government.

### Talking Points

-----

¶8. (SBU) Begin unclassified talking points:

The security of global aviation is the shared responsibility of all countries. Recent events have shown that when an individual enters an airport in one corner of the world, he can threaten countries and the lives of people far in the distance.

The attempted December 25 bombing of a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit has been of great concern to the President and required an immediate enhancement of screening protocols for passengers flying to the United States. The institution of these enhanced procedures, including full-body pat-downs of 100 percent of all passengers and physical examinations of all accessible property represented a significant burden

on airlines, airports and aviation security authorities worldwide. Increased TSA screening measures have already been successful in disrupting an attempt to repeat the scenario employed by the Christmas bomber.

In an effort to better focus our search for those seeking to attack civil aircraft, the United States has decided to reduce the requirement for 100 percent screening to passengers holding passports from or traveling to the United States from or through only a limited number of countries. The initial list comprises

STATE 00001187 004 OF 007

14 countries, including those designated by the State Department as state sponsors of terrorism. Others were included on the list based on current threat assessments, coupled with historic patterns of terrorist movements and activities.

All persons traveling to the United States who hold passports issued by any of the 14 countries are subject to enhanced screening. All persons, regardless of their nationality/passport, to include U.S. citizens, who are flying to the United States from one of the 14 countries, or whose itinerary has taken them through one of these countries, are also subject to enhanced screening.

Passengers flying to the United States who 1) do not hold passports from these 14 countries and 2) are not flying from or through any of the 14 countries, are, nonetheless, also subject to enhanced screening procedures, based on a random and threat-based selection. Passengers on U.S. government watch lists may also be subject to enhanced screening.

Air carriers may exempt the following people (as well as their respective spouses and children under 12) from enhanced screening:

- heads of state;
- heads of government;
- government ministers;
- ambassadors to the United States; and
- permanent representatives to the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

(Note: Further information on the enhanced procedures is provided in the Q and A,s in paragraph 9 below. End note.)

On December 25, a terrorist successfully evaded established screening procedures and existing technology to board an aircraft and attempt an attack against the continental United States. That event has required the United States to take further steps to better protect travelers flying to the United States from locations where security circumstances and travel patterns merit heightened screening procedures. Several of the 14 countries affected by the new TSA guidelines enjoy close

bilateral relations with the United States and engage with us on a range of issues, including regional stability and counterterrorism cooperation. Unlike state sponsors of terrorism, whose actions facilitate violent extremism, these countries have been proactive in countering terrorist organizations. We will continue to work with our partners

STATE 00001187 005 OF 007

to sustain and deepen our cooperation, including on counterterrorism issues.

This event has underscored the need for closer international cooperation to secure global aviation networks upon which we all depend. In order to provide the security all our citizens deserve, we believe we must collect information, share information, expand the use of technology, and strengthen international standards. The Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security is traveling to several countries the weeks of January 3 and 9 to hear the views of the international community. In the coming weeks and months we will continue and widen this dialogue and we welcome your input to it.

End talking points

Enhanced Screening Q & A,s

-----  
9 (U) Begin questions and answers

Q: What are the new screening requirements that have been instituted by TSA?

A:

Following the December 25 attempted bombing of an aircraft flying from Amsterdam to Detroit, TSA has implemented enhanced security measures for all international flights to U.S. locations (including both U.S. and international carriers). All international passengers will be subject to enhanced screening, and the majority of passengers will be screened using threat-based or random measures. This includes U.S. citizens.

Until now, most foreign and U.S. carriers and countries only had to meet international security requirements. Now TSA has mandated that all international flights (both U.S. and international carriers) to the United States must add additional measures. These additional measures are sustainable and provide a significant increase in our security posture.

Additionally, TSA is implementing enhanced measures for passengers with passports from or itineraries from or through certain countries of interest.<sup>8</sup> This requirement goes beyond simply looking at passports, focusing as well where passengers are flying from or through prior to departing for the United States.

These are changes that were not widely in place for all carriers or countries on December 24. These are sustainable

measures that are a significant enhancement to our national security posture. TSA will continuously review

STATE 00001187 006 OF 007

these measures with our global aviation partners to ensure the highest levels of security.

Q. What are the 14 countries of interest?<sup>8</sup>

A: The 14 include the countries designated by the State Department as State Sponsors of Terrorism.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the U.S. Government has added a number of other countries to which these enhanced screening procedures will apply. The inclusion of these additional countries reflects a careful assessment of various factors, including current counterterrorism intelligence and current and historic patterns of terrorist movements and activities. Air travel in these countries is assessed to be at greater risk of interference by known and potential terrorists targeting American citizens and interests. This list is under regular review and it will be modified as circumstances and our assessment of the risk of attacks warrant.

Q. What are the enhanced screening measures?

A: Full-body pat-downs and physical inspection of accessible property being taken by the passenger onto the aircraft. They may also include advanced explosive detection technology or advanced imaging technology where available.

Q. What can passengers traveling to the United States from airports in the 14 countries of interest expect? What of those who have traveled through one of these countries as part of their itinerary taking them to the United States?

A: All passengers, regardless of nationality, who are departing from one of the 14 countries on the way to the United States are subject to enhanced screening in the form of full-body pat-downs and examination of all their personal property being taken aboard the aircraft. Similarly, passengers departing to the United States from a third country but whose current itinerary has taken them through one of the 14 will be given enhanced screening and their property examined. This includes holders of American passports.

Q. What are the procedures for a person traveling to the United States who holds a passport issued by one of the 14 countries but who is not departing from or transiting through one of the 14?

STATE 00001187 007 OF 007

A: A person holding a passport issued by one of the 14 countries is subject to the same enhanced screening when flying to the United States, regardless of point of origin.

¶Q. Are there special provisions made for dignitaries?

A: Air carriers may exempt the following people (as well as their respective spouses and children under 12) from enhanced screening:

- heads of state;
- heads of government;
- government ministers;
- ambassadors to the United States; and
- permanent representatives to the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

End of Q and A's.

¶10. (SBU) At each post,s discretion, Embassy may make appropriate assurances to its host government that the United States greatly values its cooperation on counterterrorism efforts, and hopes that such cooperation will continue.

¶11. (SBU) This message coordinated with TSA and DHS. INFO posts, particularly those with significant air travel to the United States, may wish to draw from these points, particularly the final talking point.  
CLINTON